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REFUGEES

W 6485
11
21 APR 1939

Registry Number } W 6485/520/48

FROM Mr. Brooks (Treasury)

No. to Mr. Reilly.

Dated 20th April, 1939.

Received in Registry } 21st April, 1939.

W : Refugees.

Treatment of refugees by Egyptian Government.

Transmits copy of letter from Mr. E.E. Roberts appealing for assistance on behalf of Miss Ruth Stark, an Austrian Jewish refugee whose German passport and Egyptian permit to stay in Egypt expire on 31st July, 1939.

The British Consular Authorities have stated that it would be impossible for Mr. Roberts to adopt Miss Stark or to become her guardian.

As this case raises the general question of treatment of refugees by Egyptian Government asks whether anything could be done.

Last Paper.

(W3479) W 6426

References.

(*Print.*)

(*How disposed of.*)

Aft. Mr Bateman (Cairo)
from Mr Randall. May 2
Aft. Mr Brooks (Treas)
from Mr Reilly.
~~Aft~~ May 2

(*Minutes.*)

I gather from the H.O that it is impossible for a British subject to adopt an alien. So the only thing to be done is to try and get the Egyptian Government to extend the Lady's (passport) permit
I should think they would be quite willing to do so, having allowed Miss Stark to stay in Egypt for a year already.
So perhaps the Embassy in Cairo could be asked to apply for an extension of the (passport) permit
Draft to Cairo submitted

G. Mclean. 25/4

BJR
25/4

(Action completed.)	(Index.)
Jm 3/5	RCds

Next Paper.

W 6522
(W11388)

17652 8/38 F.O.P.

PAYMASTER GENERAL'S OFFICE

Treasury, W 6485
S.W. 1.
21 APR 1939

20th April 1939.

Dear Reilly,

The writer of the enclosed letter once served with Lord Winterton, who is anxious to assist him if at all possible. As you will see, although the letter concerns an individual case it raises the general question of the treatment of refugees by the Egyptian Government. I should be glad to know whether you think anything could be done, provided, that is, that the facts are as stated; otherwise it is a little difficult to know how to reply to Mr. Roberts, and I should be glad of your advice.

Yours sincerely,

H. E. Brooks

D. P. Reilly, Esq.,
Foreign Office.

E. E. ROBERTS

P. O. Box 127
ALEXANDRIA

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12th April, 1939.

The Rt. Hon. the Earl of Winterton, P.C., T.D., M.P.,
Chairman of the Evian Refugee Committee,
LONDON.

My Lord,

I have the honour to bring to your Lordship's attention the following facts concerning a young Austrian refugee, and would respectfully beg your Lordship's advice in the matter.

The young lady in question, Miss Ruth Stark, is a Jewess, and a niece of my wife, who is a graduated D.Ph. of Vienna University. Miss Stark's character and moral outlook are beyond reproach.

Personally I am a Welshman, and served my country from July, 1914, to June, 1920, in the Royal Welch Fusiliers (T.F). I have a comfortable position with one of the leading cotton exporting firms in this City, and I am consequently in a position to provide for Miss Stark.

Following the Anschluss last year my wife and I arranged for Miss Stark to come and live with us, and I was successful in obtaining for her a permit to enter Egypt and remain for six months. Accordingly, Miss Stark arrived in Egypt at the latter end of July last, and on the expiry of her permit in January I was fortunately able to obtain an extension for another six months, i.e., until the 31st July, 1939.

Meanwhile, in December last, her Austrian passport was taken away from her and she was given instead a German passport (branded "J" for Jewish) valid for six months only; in other words, the validity of her new passport was so arranged as to expire on the same date as her permission from the Egyptian Authorities to remain in Egypt.

E. E. ROBERTS

P. O. Box 127
ALEXANDRIA

Fearing that the Egyptian Government might not go on indefinitely renewing Miss Stark's temporary stay in this country, and, at the same time, anxious to provide for her future, I decided to approach the British Consular Authorities here with the view to obtaining advice as to whether it would be possible,

(a) to adopt Miss Stark,

or

(b) to so arrange that I should be considered, in the eyes of the British Government, as her legal guardian.

In either of these ways I had hoped to ensure Miss Stark's future welfare.

However, although my démarches were very sympathetically received, I was informed that (a) would be impossible as Miss Stark is major (she was 21 last August); whilst, as regards (b), the Authorities did not know of any means whereby I could become the guardian of a foreign subject. In the circumstances all they could do was to promise that should I meet with any difficulty in getting Miss Stark's permit renewed they might be able to help, unofficially of course, by supporting my application.

The position has since become somewhat desperate, for I have now been informed that it is the Egyptian Government's intention to expel all refugees holding German passports as and when their permits expire, or in any case not later than 31st July, 1939. The procedure, I am further informed, will be that they will be placed on German ships and, consequently, left to the mercy of those into whose hands they fall; unless of course they have been fortunate enough to procure a visa for another country. I am sure your Lordship will agree with me that the picture of what might happen to a young girl of twenty-one in such circumstances is too horrible to contemplate.

E. E. ROBERTS

P. O. Box 127
ALEXANDRIA

I have no reason to doubt the authenticity of the foregoing information - in fact, I may say that several cases have already come to my notice.

Even if I were able to obtain from the local Authorities a further extension of Miss Stark's stay in Egypt, it is extremely problematical whether the German Authorities will renew her passport, a contingency which would cause the Egyptian Government immediately to request her departure.

Miss Stark's parents are themselves refugees, almost penniless, and in no position to give her assistance of any kind. Her mother and her small brother are near Paris, and are being cared for by my wife's brother. Her father is in Switzerland on a temporary permit, and in a state of sheer despair, not knowing what to do or where to go as most countries have refused him a visa on account of the fact that he is too old (52), and without funds.

The object of this letter is therefore to implore, in the name of humanity and all that our great nation stands for, your Lordship's most sympathetic assistance in solving Miss Stark's problem and thus eliminate the dreadful spectre which the future may hold for her.

I would further beg your Lordship's earnest attention to the possibility of my being able to adopt Miss Stark, notwithstanding that she is major and the subject (nominally) of a foreign country. In this connection I should add that she has already obtained the written permission of both her parents.

I sincerely feel that it is only by her remaining in the care of my wife and myself that her future can be safeguarded; in any case there is no one else who can offer her refuge, since all the members of her family have either committed suicide, or have been sent to concentration camps, or are now scattered, penniless, in various parts of the world.

E. E. ROBERTS

P. O. Box 127
ALEXANDRIA

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Before closing I would respectfully tender to your Lordship my sincere apologies for troubling you in the matter, but the thought that having brought her safely out of a position of the gravest danger she should have to return again into the hands of what I can only call hell-hounds, to whom the grossest insults and even rape are commonplace, justifies, I hope, the liberty I take in appealing to your Lordship.

Your Lordship's kind attention will be most gratefully appreciated, and in begging the favour of your Lordship's early and gracious consideration of this most fervent appeal,

I have the honour to be,

Your Lordship's obedient servant,

E. Roberts

Evan E. Roberts.

P.S. I should like to mention that I am well known to H. B. M's Consul-General in Alexandria.

OUT FILE

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FOREIGN OFFICE, S.W.1.

(W 6485/520/48). 2nd May, 1939.

Dear Bateman,

I enclose a copy of a letter from a Mr. Evan Roberts to Lord Winterton as well as a copy of a covering note to that letter from Lord Winterton's Private Secretary. You will see that Lord Winterton is anxious to assist as Mr. Roberts once served with him. It is of course impossible for Mr. Roberts to adopt Miss Stark, and the only way we can help seems to be to try and get the Egyptian Government to extend the permit for her to remain in Egypt. If you see no objection would you ask the competent authorities if this can be done, and if it cannot perhaps you could take any appropriate action on behalf of Miss Stark.

Yours

(Sgd.) A. W. G. RANDALL

C. H. Bateman, Esq., C.M.G., M.C.

Cairo.

OUT FILE

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FOREIGN OFFICE, S.W.1.

(W 6485/520/48). 2nd May, 1939.

Dear Brooks,

Thank you for your letter of the 20th April in which you enclose a letter sent to Lord Winterton by a Mr. Evan Roberts.

I am afraid that by English Law it would be quite out of the question for Mr. Roberts to adopt Miss Stark. And the only possible thing to be done seems to be to ask the Egyptian Government to extend Miss Stark's permit to stay in Egypt. We have therefore written to Cairo (a copy of the letter is enclosed) and asked the Embassy to take action on these lines. Perhaps you would explain the situation to Lord Winterton.

Yours sincerely

Pro pp- Dr Reilly

H. E. Brooks, Esq.
Treasury.